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Obituary Notice of Dr. Conolly. By Sir JAMES CLARK, Bart.,
etc., etc.

[*Read June 12th, 1866.*]

AT a late meeting of this Society was announced the death of an esteemed member, Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, one of the originators and most zealous supporters of the Ethnological Society, and an eminent physician who has left his mark on the progress of medical science. We have now to record the loss of another valuable member, Dr. John Conolly, also a distinguished physician, and pre-eminent in the special department of his profession, to which he principally devoted the great powers of his mind. Dr. Conolly succeeded the late Sir Benjamin Brodie as President of the Society, and occupied the chair for the usual period of two years. He felt a great interest in the progress of ethnology, and never failed in his attendance at the Council and at the evening meetings of the Society, when his health, which had already begun to fail, permitted; and there are many among us who must well remember Dr. Conolly's graceful eloquence and conciliatory manner in the chair during his presidency. He contributed one paper to our *Transactions*, afterwards published in a pamphlet, entitled "The Ethnological Exhibitions of London."

Dr. Conolly was born at Market Rasen in Lincolnshire in 1794. His first entrance into life, at the age of eighteen, was as an officer in a militia regiment, in which he served for several years. He married at an early age the daughter of Sir John Collins, and about one year afterwards decided on entering the medical profession. In 1821 he commenced the study of medicine, became a student of the University of Edinburgh, and at the termination of his *curriculum* received the degree of Doctor of Medicine with great distinction. Insanity was the subject of his inaugural thesis; showing at how early a period of his medical life his mind was directed to the study of psychology. Dr. Conolly was much esteemed at the university. He was one of the Presidents of the Royal Medical Society, where he was remarked for the easy and eloquent expression of his views in the discussions of the Society, and in his addresses.

On leaving Edinburgh, Dr. Conolly settled in practice at Lewes, the county town of Sussex; but finding small scope for a physician there, he removed to Chichester, about the same time that the late Sir John Forbes settled in that town. Drawn together by congenial tastes and pursuits, the two young physicians formed a warm friendship, which ended only with the death

of the latter, a few years ago. It was soon found, however, that even the cathedral town of Chichester did not afford a sufficient field for the practice of two physicians, and Dr. Conolly again removed to Stratford-on-Avon, where he remained till 1827; he then settled in London, and soon after was appointed Professor of the Practice of Medicine in University College, London, a remarkable distinction, considering that Dr. Conolly was then only thirty-three years of age. He held the professorship for several years with marked distinction; but finding that the life of a London physician was not to his taste, he resigned and returned to the country, and took up his residence at Warwick, being appointed at the same time Inspecting-Physician of the lunatic asylums in that county. Here he remained till 1839, when he was invited to become Resident-Physician to the County Asylum at Hanwell, then the largest in England. Dr. Conolly now felt himself, for the first time, in the position which he had long desired. An ample field was afforded him for putting in practice his enlightened and benevolent views on the management of the insane, and he at once adopted the mild and humane treatment in its fullest extent, together with the total abolition of mechanical restraint, by far the greatest improvement ever introduced in the treatment of the lunatic. And here it may be interesting to take a brief survey of the origin and progress of the vast improvement effected since the conclusion of the last century in the treatment of the insane, and in the management of lunatic asylums; an improvement in which the labours of Dr. Conolly had so large a share.

Towards the end of the French Revolution, Pinel, an eminent and philanthropic physician in Paris, was selected to take charge of the Bicêtre, the largest lunatic asylum, or rather prison, in Paris, then in a frightful state of disorder. Pinel at once changed the whole treatment in the asylum. He abolished chains, and substituted a mild, humane treatment, for the harsh, cruel system which he found in practice, with the best effects. To Pinel, therefore, belongs the merit of first introducing the humane treatment of the insane, at a time when lunatics, throughout the whole of Europe, were treated more like wild animals than human beings.

Esquirol, the pupil and friend of Pinel, succeeded him as physician to the Bicêtre, and was indefatigable in carrying out the philanthropic and enlightened views of his master, both in his practice and by his writings.

The beneficial effects of Pinel's treatment became known in England about the time that the public were shocked by the frightful disclosures of the cruelties and neglect which disgraced the old York Asylum, and led to the establishment of the Retreat, near York, by the Society of Friends.

In this admirable asylum, chiefly under the advice and direction of William Tuke, the treatment of the insane was conducted for the first time on the most humane and enlightened principles. This was a great advance in the treatment of the lunatic.* The next step was the disuse of mechanical restraint, first introduced by the late Dr. Charlesworth and Mr. Gardiner Hill, in the Lincoln Asylum. Very soon after this, Dr. Conolly was fortunately appointed Physician to the County Asylum of Middlesex, where he at once adopted the non-restraint system, satisfied, by what he had witnessed in the Lincoln Asylum, not only that it might be frequently omitted, but that it was altogether unnecessary, and even injurious.†

By Dr. Conolly's unceasing exertion, often under considerable difficulties, during the four years that he held the appointment of resident physician to the Hanwell Asylum, he succeeded in establishing non-restraint as the invariable rule, and in satisfying the numerous physicians who came to witness the practice under his direction, not only of the safety but of the immense advantage of the system in allaying irritation and calming the most excited lunatics; and the publication of his admirable annual reports, recording the successful application and beneficial effects of the treatment, made it generally known to all who felt an interest in the unfortunate insane.

If to Pinel in France, and to Tuke in England, we may fairly ascribe the honour of being the first to introduce the mild, humane treatment of the insane, and to Dr. Charlesworth and Mr. Gardiner Hill that of being the first to adopt and carry out the non-restraint treatment in the Lincoln Asylum, to Dr. Conolly is due the merit of demonstrating its beneficial effects on a large scale, and for a series of years; and it was Dr. Conolly who finally established, by his practice, and by his eloquent and earnest writings, the non-restraint system as the rule in all asylums—the greatest boon ever conferred on the unfortunate and too long harshly-treated lunatic,—a work which will transmit Dr. Conolly's name to posterity as one of the greatest benefactors of mankind. Sir Thomas Watson, the President of the Royal College of Physicians, in his obituary notice of Dr. Conolly, thus speaks of him and his efforts in the

* Tuke's account of the York Retreat, led the way, in this country, to an entire revolution of opinion and treatment in lunatic asylums.—Conolly's "Clinical Lectures".

† When Dr. Conolly entered on his duties at Hanwell in June, there were seventy patients daily under mechanical restraint; by September of the same year, every object of mechanical restraint and coercion was destroyed or removed; and henceforth no patient in the Hanwell Asylum has been placed under mechanical restraint—a circumstance to which Dr. Conolly might well refer with pride.

cause of the insane :*—"Dr. Conolly's renown will rest, and his name will go down to a late posterity, upon his having been the first and foremost in redressing and abolishing that hideous neglect, those cruel methods of restraint and even torture, which had been the scandal of our land, in respect of the treatment of the insane. He showed, not merely by eloquent and pathetic reasoning, but by the testimony of undeniable facts, that most of the shackles and privations which had been imposed upon those unhappy beings were unnecessary and hurtful, and that their release from needless bodily misery and degradation tended more than any other thing to restore, or, when restoration was impossible, to improve, their mental health. The spirit of John Conolly was congenial with the spirit of John Howard; and their noble example has left behind them, and encouraged, a similar spirit, which is actively and widely at work in this nation." To estimate the benefits which Dr. Conolly has conferred on society may also be adduced the opinion of the noble and philanthropic chairman of the English Commission of Lunacy, than whom no one is better acquainted with the past and present mode of treatment of the insane. "To understand," says the Earl of Shaftesbury, "the remarkable merits of Dr. Conolly, we must remember the state of things which prevailed in lunatic asylums some thirty years ago. The lunatic was treated without any regard to cure; being regarded as a savage beast, who was only to be cowed; and the lunatic asylum was worse than a prison. Now all that is changed, and nearly every vestige of barbarism has been effaced."

Dr. Conolly's attention was not confined to the lunatic; he evinced a great interest in ameliorating the long neglected condition of the idiot and imbecile, and took an active part, with the late philanthropic Dr. Andrew Reed, in establishing and superintending the Earlswood Asylum for Idiots, now so admirably conducted by Dr. Down.

In addition to his professional pursuits, of which the study of insanity formed the great part, Dr. Conolly was engaged during many years of his life in literary labours. He was associated with his friends, Sir John Forbes and Dr. Tweedie, in editing the *Cyclopædia of Practical Medicine*, a large and important medical work. Afterwards he joined Sir John Forbes, for some time, in editing the *British and Foreign Medical Review*, a publication which had no small influence in improving the state of medical literature in this country. No critical journal was ever conducted on higher or more disinterested principles, and the ability and unflinching honesty with which the medical publica-

* Annual Oration, 1866.

tions of the time were reviewed, contributed greatly to improve the loose and often illogical manner in which many of our medical publications were written at the time when that Journal was commenced ; and what is still more important, the rational principles upon which the study and treatment of disease should be founded were in that journal ably inculcated ; and its enlightened articles contributed largely to bring about that more rational and simple method of treating disease, which has happily taken the place of the polypharmic and so-called active system of treatment, which prevailed generally in this country some thirty years ago. Dr. Conolly also contributed some valuable papers to the publications of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and many more to the medical periodical journals.

The total neglect of insanity as a branch of medical education in our universities and medical schools had long been a subject of regret to Dr. Conolly, and he offered to give a special course of lectures on disordered states of the mind when he was Professor of Medicine in University College, London. "The interests of the public," he remarked, "greatly require that medical men, to whom alone the insane can ever be properly trusted, should have opportunities of studying the forms of insanity, and prepare themselves for its treatment in the same manner in which they prepare themselves for the treatment of other disorders. They have at present no such opportunities." His opinion was that every public lunatic asylum should be available for practical instruction :—"It would be some compensation," he said, "for the unavoidable evils of public asylums, if each establishment of that kind became a clinical school in which, under certain restrictions, medical students might prepare themselves for their future duties to the insane. It is true that insane patients are not always in a state to be visited by pupils, and that a very strict discipline would be necessary to prevent disorder or impropriety, but such discipline is quite practicable, and such arrangements might be made as would at once guard those patients whom disturbance might injure, and yet present a sufficient number of instructive examples to the students."*

Dr. Conolly's observations on the absence in our medical schools of all instruction on the subject of insanity are noticed here, because they are still applicable to the state of our medical education. The Senate of the University of London have recently made a step in the right direction, by expressing their opinion that it was highly desirable that candidates for the M.B. degree should practically acquaint themselves with the different forms of insanity in a lunatic asylum, and for this purpose they recognise three

* "Indications of Insanity", preface.

months of such attendance as equivalent to the same period of attendance in a medical hospital.

In the University of Edinburgh the present Professor of Medicine, Dr. Laycock, has for the last ten years delivered a course of lectures on medical psychology and mental diseases during the summer sessions; and, although the course is voluntary, it has been well attended. This is a step to make the course a part of the regular medical curriculum.

When the opportunity occurred, Dr. Conolly did all he could to remedy this defect in medical education by instituting a course of clinical lectures in the Hanwell Asylum; showing, contrary to the opinion entertained by some medical men, that practical instruction might be given in all well-conducted lunatic asylums without disturbance to the patients.

The plan of conducting these lectures at Hanwell was admirably adapted for practical instruction. One day a week was devoted to them during the summer; the early part being occupied by Dr. Conolly and the assistant-physician of the asylum in conducting the students and young physicians who attended the lectures through the wards, making them acquainted with the character and phases of insanity as exhibited in the patients before them, directing their attention more particularly to the cases whom Dr. Conolly had selected for illustrating the afternoon lecture. No such complete course of clinical instruction was, I believe, ever given before or since, certainly not in this country; and when it is considered that they were continued for eight years and were entirely gratuitous, they afford a striking proof of Dr. Conolly's zeal in encouraging the practical study of insanity.

Having learned that my friend Dr. Gull had attended Dr. Conolly's clinical lectures at Hanwell, I asked him to write me his opinion of them, both as regarded their advantage to the students and their effects upon the tranquillity of the Asylum. The following reply of Dr. Gull is most satisfactory on both points:—

“22, Brook Street, Grosvenor Square, W.

“DEAR SIR JAMES CLARK,

“I regret your note should have remained so long unanswered, but I have not had a convenient time to reply to it, and I was unwilling to answer it cursorily.

“I had the advantage of attending the clinical lectures given by Dr. Conolly at the Hanwell Asylum. I do not remember the date at which they were given, but it must be more than twenty years ago. I retain the most vivid and pleasant remembrance of them. Two students were nominated from each of the metropolitan hospitals to form this clinical class. We assembled at Han-

well about noon once a week. We then made a visit through the wards in company with Dr. Conolly and Dr. Begley, receiving some words of instruction upon the cases in general, and having our attention especially directed to particular ones. This occupied, probably, near two hours; I believe sometimes more. We thus, from week to week, saw almost every phase of mental disorder from acute mania to general paralysis and dementia. We also saw the application of the system of non-restraint, then on its trial, directed by that kind and calm and philosophic temper so very conspicuous in Dr. Conolly. I cannot express to you the charm we all felt in these visits. The Asylum in the country, apart from the noise and bustle of the town; the novelty of the clinical work and teaching; the new field of facts before us, contrasting with those afforded in the routine of our other hospitals; the feeling of the peculiar advantages thus enjoyed—all combined to make us eager and thankful. I have often regretted that such great opportunities have been since neglected, and that year by year these large fields of knowledge have been lying waste and barren. If by any word you could awaken again the minds of those who govern and direct these institutions, so that they might make them available for medical instruction, after the manner inaugurated by Dr. Conolly, you would indeed prove a benefactor to us all. It is lamentable to think what ignorance yet prevails in and out of our profession, on the subject of insanity. So it will be whilst the matter remains a special study. The prejudice was too strong for even Dr. Conolly. He set a bright example, but the difficulties were too great, and it died out soon. I should, indeed, be glad to think that others should in long succession enjoy such opportunities as we had at Hanwell.

“I can also satisfactorily answer your inquiry respecting the effect of our visits upon the inmates of the Asylum. To the great majority it was a matter of indifference, or of some interest and to others it seemed to give pleasure. Generally the visit round the wards was with as little inconvenience to the patients as it would have been had it been round the wards of a hospital for general diseases. There were occasions when it was necessary to caution the students against approaching or addressing certain cases, when, from some mental peculiarity, any familiarity would have caused excitement. As such cases were known beforehand to the physician, they were easily avoided, whilst they, at the same time, afforded important clinical hints. I may here say that this course of instruction in the Asylum necessitated and enforced a careful demeanour of the students.

“The cases of acute mania requiring entire quiet and seclusion are rare in all asylums, but even these could often be seen unobserved through the wickets of the padded rooms in which they

were confined, without disturbance, whilst the physician supplied the closer facts of each case, and directed our minds to the proper consideration of them. When the severity of the attack was passing off, Dr. Conolly would, at his discretion, permit us to have a closer study of such cases, in the same way that in our general hospitals the severer diseases are guarded by the physician against injurious examinations. In all the visits I paid to Hanwell, I never saw anything caused by the presence of the students, which militated against the good order of the establishment or the welfare of the patients.

“From what I saw at Hanwell, and from my experience since, I have no doubt of the practicability of making the public lunatic asylums schools for medical men and jurists, without detriment to the inmates. On the contrary, if this were done, much good must accrue every way. Nothing develops those establishments so much as making them centres of scientific observation and practical instruction. Without this our large hospitals would have been but infirmaries, and the sick would certainly not have had the best treatment.

“The debt I owe to Dr. Conolly obliges me to incur the risk of being tedious, if thereby I may express my obligations to his memory.

“With the best wishes of this season, I am,

“My dear Sir James Clark,

“Yours sincerely,

“WILLIAM W. GULL.

“Dec. 25, 1866.”

No opinion of the value of such clinical lectures as those given in the Hanwell Asylum could be more valuable than that of Dr. Gull, who has long been physician to one of the largest hospitals in London, one of our most zealous clinical teachers, and now one of the most eminent consulting physicians in London. I fervently wish with Dr. Gull that some powerful influences could be brought to bear on the directors of asylums to induce them to open their wards for practical instruction. It is with great pleasure I have just been informed that the directors of St. Luke's and Bethlehem have set the example of opening the wards of their asylums to medical pupils.

In these lectures Dr. Conolly was in the habit of pointing out the assistance afforded by phrenology in the diagnosis and treatment in many cases of insanity. He had studied at an early period phrenology as a branch of physiology, and, in a lecture on insanity in the Royal Institution, gave the following rational view of phrenology:—

“Although the doctrines of the phrenologists have met with little favour, and the pretensions of recent professors of occult

methods of acting upon the nervous system have thrown an air of absurdity even over the truths of what is called phrenology, no person not altogether devoid of the power of observation can affect to overlook the general importance of the shape and even of the size of the brain in relation to the development of the mental faculties. The head of an idiot always manifests defect in one of these particulars, if not in both. The head of a lunatic is irregularly developed in a very large majority of instances ; and in the worst cases of insanity, where the tendency of the disorder is to pass into dementia, the anterior lobes of the brain are very defective. If we refuse to admit that the constitution, size, and shape of the brain have any relation to or connection with the extraordinary manifestation of particular faculties, in various instances, independently of all education, we must deny that the large lobes of the brain in man are of any use at all in relation to faculties which are certainly not seated in other portions of the nervous system. It is more reasonable to consider each of the large and marked divisions of the brain, and each of the convolutions, with their copious supply of grey or vesicular nerve-substance, as possessing distinct-offices ; and the more or less perfect development of these several masses, and the greater or less nervous energy they possess, as circumstances connected with the varieties of mental character, and with the disordered manifestations of the mind. Each mass, or each subdivision of such masses, may, like each nerve, have a distinct office. Each, however excited, may only be capable of one kind of manifestation of the excitement. Each, when in a healthy state, may be excited simultaneously throughout ; and each in disease may be excited irregularly, or too long, or lose the power of being excited altogether."

Dr. Conolly's literary and rather sedentary habits, coupled with his anxious professional duties, began to tell injuriously on his health long before he retired from practice. He suffered much from chronic rheumatism complicated by neuralgic complaints ; and during the latter years of his life his nervous system gave evident indications of failing power, and his capacity for mental work became greatly diminished ; he felt, he said, that age was creeping upon him, and he lately withdrew almost entirely from practice, and retired to his residence, Lawn House, near and in sight of the scene of his most important labours. Here, although he felt unequal to much mental exertion, his days were not spent idly, and he employed much of his time in reading the best classical authors, and it was now that he wrote his last elegant little work *The Study of Hamlet*. In a letter to the author of this memoir, who had suggested to him to write his views on the insanity of old age, he agreed that the subject had not received the attention

which it deserves. "It is curious," he adds, "that the subject of the delusions of old age has been often and lately the particular subject of my thoughts; and I would willingly comply with your desire, but that mental energy is wanting." In another note, written only a few months before his death (Nov. 30, 1865), he evidently felt that his end was approaching, but wrote in a tranquil and even cheerful state of mind. "It is a great blessing," he observed, "to retain one's internal faculties and to be perfectly content and grateful to the Author of our being, on whom we all depend." From this time he continued to decline, and died on the 5th of March from an attack of paralysis complicated with convulsions, which proved fatal in a few hours.

If the state of a man's mind during the last years of his life may be taken as an indication of the feelings with which he looks back on the part he played in the position of life allotted to him, Dr. Conolly's retrospect must have been a highly satisfactory one; and the tranquil, contented, and happy state of mind which he exhibited during the period of his retirement, showed that it was so. He enjoyed the consolation of reflecting, that his life had been one of active benevolence and usefulness, and he had the further happiness of knowing that his labours in the cause of humanity had contributed largely to the permanent alleviation of human suffering in the most "calamitous of all diseases." To his benevolent disposition such reflections could not fail to prove highly gratifying.

Dr. Conolly was much esteemed by all who knew him. On his retirement as visiting physician in the Hanwell Asylum, rendered necessary by the increasing extent of his practice, the members of the profession, as a mark of their esteem and their admiration of his indefatigable and successful labours in the cause of the lunatic, presented him with a valuable and elegant piece of plate, with a portrait of himself by the late Sir Watson Gordon. It was in presenting this memorial that Lord Shaftesbury stated the vast improvements introduced by Dr. Conolly into the treatment of the insane, quoted in a former part of this memoir. At the same time, the Committee of Visitors of the Hanwell Asylum expressed to Dr. Conolly their unanimous request that he would accept the office of consulting physician for life, which he accepted with pleasure, although it was not altogether a sinecure. He was a frequent visitor at the Asylum, and continued his clinical lectures for years.

Dr. Conolly was for many years the chief consulting physician in all important cases of insanity. His opinion was much sought for in medico-legal questions, and he appeared in nearly all the important lunacy trials of late years. His evidence was always clear and unimpassioned, and the verdict of the jury almost invariably

in unison with it. He was held in high estimation on the Continent as well as in his own country ; was an honorary member of many foreign medical and scientific societies, and the University of Oxford conferred on him the honorary degree of D.C.L., when the same degree was conferred on his friends Sir John Forbes and Sir Charles Hastings.

Dr. Conolly was one of the founders of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, and, with Sir John Forbes, took an active part in assisting their mutual friend Sir Charles Hastings, who originated and was essentially the founder, and, as long as he lived, the animating spirit of the Association. The Association was a great success, and had a powerful influence in promoting the progress and the diffusion of medical science among the members of the profession throughout the whole kingdom. Dr. Conolly contributed a valuable paper in the first volume of the *Transactions of the Association* "On the Establishment of County Natural History Societies." The plan which he laid down was excellent, and embraced the collection of every kind of information connected with the health and well-being of the inhabitants, and, among other things, the formation of a museum of natural history. In the county of Worcester the plan was carried out, and a splendid Museum of Natural History now exists in Worcester, formed chiefly under the direction, and by the exertions of Sir Charles Hastings, who was President of the Society, and had given unremitting care to its management for many years, and continued to do so up to his death.

Dr. Conolly was a man of great natural talent and of a highly cultivated mind ; he was an elegant writer and a most agreeable and persuasive speaker, more especially when pleading the cause of charity ; as Sir Thomas Watson has well remarked, "There was a pleasing harmony between Dr. Conolly's aspect and manners, which were gentle and engaging, his oratory was easy, copious, elegant, and persuasive, and his written style correct, refined, and graceful."* He was a true and warm friend, and an agreeable companion whom it was always pleasant to meet.

At the recent annual meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association, of which Dr. Conolly had been twice president, held in Edinburgh, Dr. W. A. Browne, Commissioner in Lunacy in Scotland, who enjoyed the friendship of Dr. Conolly through life, thus spoke of him in his presidential address :—

"John Conolly displayed, within the university of this town, and in the arena of the Royal Medical Society—dear to many of those who hear me—those predilections and preferences which ultimately determined his destiny, and gave him a position of nearly equal rank among physicians and philanthropists. His

* Oration.

thesis was on Insanity, and formed the foundation of that work by which he is most popularly known. A physician in increasing practice, one of the editors and originators of the *British and Foreign Medical Review and Cyclopædia of Practical Medicine*, and a teacher in a University, John Conolly, I know, never felt that he had secured his true position, or that he had found a fair field for the exercise of his head and heart, until he was appointed medical superintendent of Hanwell. It is not affirmed that he made personal sacrifices in order to accept this distinction ; but, like that of many other great and good men, his life was one of much sacrifice and much suffering. It is not my province here, however much it may be my inclination, to speak of more of his good deeds than of the assistance he afforded in the grand revolution effected in the management, and of the effects of his teaching in the propagation of sound views in the treatment, of the insane and of the idiotic. I cannot refrain from claiming him as an advocate—and as a philosophical advocate—of a medico-psychology founded upon induction. His ideas, it is true, seemed to have passed through his heart, and his feelings to have raised and rarefied his intellect. Perhaps it is because of the elegance and popular attractions of his style that his habits of thinking have been regarded as less logical than illustrative ; but his *Indications of Insanity* show a familiarity with the laws of the human mind, and especially with the peculiarities and subtle defects by which it is disturbed and unhinged, requiring great perspicacity and penetration, as well as careful analysis.

“Sensitive in his rectitude, gentle and genial, he was to all men conciliating and courteous ; to his friends, and I judge after an experience of thirty years, he was almost chivalrously faithful and generous ; and the insane he positively loved.”

At the same meeting, at which Dr. Browne pronounced this elegant and just encomium on his late friend, a resolution was passed to open a subscription, under the auspices of the members of the Association, to establish an annual prize in the form of an essay on Psychology, or some other fitting testimonial in memory of Dr. Conolly ; and Baron Mundy presented the Association with a marble bust of the doctor, executed by the celebrated Roman sculptor, Cav. Benzoni.*

* Baron Mundy, a German physician, and one of Dr. Conolly's most esteemed foreign friends, had devoted much time in studying the nature and treatment of insanity, and had witnessed the treatment in the Hanwell asylum. No one appreciated more fully the value of Dr. Conolly's labours, or exerted himself more strenuously to diffuse a knowledge of them on the continent, and to impress upon the physicians of lunatic asylums, more especially, the great superiority of the mild and non-restraint system of treatment. The bust presented by Baron Mundy will, at the request of the Association, and by the consent of the President and Fellows, find an appropriate place in the College of Physicians of London.

Dr. Conolly's most important published works are those on insanity. In 1830 he published his *Inquiry concerning the Indications of Insanity*, an able and most valuable work, whether we regard the philosophic and judicious plan on which the whole subject is treated, and more especially the ability with which the functions of the healthy mind are examined and analysed as a foundation for the study of its disorders. This part of the work deserves the careful study of all who are engaged in the education of youth, and even of the fathers of families. They will find the most enlightened advice, in clear intelligible language, for promoting the healthy development of the young mind by the well-directed education of its faculties, and the prevention of mental injury, the consequence of their injudicious and misdirected exercise. To the members of the legal, as well as those of the medical profession commencing the study of psychology, we know no work so well calculated to give them sound views on the subject. This work placed Dr. Conolly in the first rank as a psychological physician.

In 1847 he published a volume on the *Construction and Government of Lunatic Asylums*, and in 1853 he brought out his valuable work on the *Treatment of the Insane without Mechanical Restraint*. In this work Dr. Conolly reviews the progress of the treatment of the insane since the close of the last century, when the mild, rational treatment of the lunatic was inaugurated by the philanthropic Pinel, to the middle of the present century, when the mild and humane treatment of the insane culminated in the total abolition of mechanical restraint by the persevering efforts of himself.

This is a thoroughly practical work, containing the most judicious rules for the application of the non-restraint system, and embraces the whole management of the Hanwell Asylum during the period of his direction of it. It ought to be carefully studied by all who are engaged in the treatment of the insane and the management of asylums.

Not the least important part of Dr. Conolly's writings are his *Lectures on Insanity*. Two courses in the Royal College of Physicians, London, the *Croonian Lectures*, and a full course in the Royal Institution. But his most important lectures are those which he gave in Hanwell Asylum. For the value of these lectures, and the judicious manner in which they were conducted, Dr. Gull's letter affords abundant evidence. It is impossible to read these lectures, which were published in the *Lancet*, without being impressed with Dr. Conolly's remarkable power of minute observation, and his deep insight into the disordered states of the human mind in their various forms, and the judicious rules for their treatment in the various conditions of the health in which

they occur. How much more impressive must these lectures have been when the subjects illustrative of them were under observation !

Dr. Conolly's last work, published a few years before his death, was his *Study of Hamlet*. An elegant philosophical essay, of which the principal object is to show that Hamlet's insanity was real ; and perhaps in none of his works has Dr. Conolly given greater proof of his powers as an able psychologist than in the minute analysis of Hamlet's mind, by which he shows that much of his conduct is only explicable on actual insanity.

The failing of Dr. Conolly's mental energy, while his reasoning powers remained sound, is greatly to be lamented. There were several subjects connected with insanity on which he was desirous of writing, but he felt unequal to the labour of composition. We have thus, in all probability, lost some of the most valuable results of his large and matured experience.

The decay of mental energy which Dr. Conolly described so feelingly as occurring in himself, is experienced more or less by all who reach an advanced age, the earlier generally in proportion to the amount and anxious nature of mental work, and the constitution of the individual. It may creep on so imperceptibly as not to be observed for some time, and even when experienced may be reluctantly admitted ; but, nevertheless, it is a physiological law of our nature, and it is true wisdom to bow reverently to it, and cease to urge the failing mental powers to a state of hopeless exhaustion, or it may be so as to derange the whole mental faculties. This failing shows itself in a different manner in different cases. It may be by a sense of lassitude, and disinclination for the usual work. Not unfrequently an early indication of over-wrought brain is an inability to concentrate the attention for any length of time, a state generally accompanied with difficulty to unravel an intricate subject which would have cost little effort a few years before. These indications of failing mental power, whether affecting the mental functions generally, or limited to one or more faculties, should be regarded as warnings, which may not be safely neglected at whatever age they occur. They afford clear evidence that the mind is unequal to the efforts to which it has hitherto been subjected, and requires rest. Although there is a considerable difference as regards the period of life when these indications of over-wrought brain first appear, and the form which they assume, they never fail to show themselves sooner or later when the cause has existed. In delicate constitutions, with active or excitable brains, they generally occur earlier in life than in those differently constituted ; but as Dr. Conolly remarks, " However well the brain is developed, and however well organised, its func-

tions, obeying the general laws of life, are still limited to a period, which differs much in different individuals.”*

The remedy in all these cases is repose from labour for a time, or at least such relaxation as would admit of the nervous system regaining its natural state. But the most effective remedy is total abstinence from mental exertion for a period proportionate to the degree of failure experienced; and the adoption, at the same time, of means calculated to improve the general health, which is almost always impaired by the mode of living implied by the excess of mental labour. If these means are judiciously adopted, before the functions of the brain have been too far exhausted, such a degree of improvement may be effected in the general health and the mental energy, as to admit of a return to work, although it ought always to be diminished work, and that generally in proportion to the advanced age at which the brain began to fail. “The danger in these cases,” observes Dr. Conolly, “arises from a return to active mental work after partial recovery. In a few years more the symptoms of exhaustion recur, and the brain becomes manifestly unequal to continued exertion.”

It might have been naturally expected that, from his large consulting practice in cases of insanity and diseases of the nervous system generally, and the extent to which his opinion was sought in medico-legal questions, that Dr. Conolly would have died rich. It was far otherwise; and this may be chiefly explained by his professional position, during the greater part of his life,—a physician in small country towns, and afterwards as resident physician in the Hanwell Asylum, his income was barely sufficient to maintain his family. Dr. Conolly was also very liberal-minded in his practice, and gave little attention to financial matters. Still he had sufficient to supply all his wants during his retirement, and to leave something to his family at his death.

He left a son and three daughters, one married to a clergyman and two to eminent psychological physicians.

* Instances may no doubt be cited of literary men, who have worked hard the greater part of their lives, and yet maintained their mental powers to a very old age. As a remarkable instance of this, I have much pleasure in referring to my friend our venerable and esteemed President, who, although he has passed his eightieth year, is known at this moment as one of the most active and energetic brain-workers of this brain-working metropolis. Mr. Crawford lately assured the writer of this notice, that he felt no diminution of his mental energy, but rather the reverse. The members of the Society will be delighted to know this, and will unite with the writer in the fervent wish that Mr. Crawford may long retain his great mental powers, to enlighten society, and to advance ethnological science, for which he has already done so much.

Note.—Although it was not without diffidence that I complied with our President's desire that I should write a notice of the life of Dr. Conolly for the *Transactions* of the Society, I readily admit that I have had great pleasure in doing so. I hope it may not be considered that I have extended my notice to too great a length. Independently of having to record the principal labours and the character of so eminent a member of our Society, the circumstances immediately connected with Dr. Conolly's professional life are, I am persuaded, of a nature so interesting as to be acceptable to the members of the Society generally. Dr. Conolly's life, in truth, comprises a very important period in the medical history of Insanity, and still more of the treatment of the insane, in both of which it will be seen that Dr. Conolly occupied a very prominent and important position.

J. C.
